

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-20 are pending in the application, with claims 1 and 11 being the independent claims. Claims 1-11 and 13-20 have been amended to improve their form. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 3, 6-10, 13, and 16-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Adams, *et al*, U.S. Patent No. 6,163,862 (Adams). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference."

Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California, 814 F.2d 628, 631 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

Adams does either expressly or inherently describe each and every element of independent claims 1 and 11.

For example, Adams does not teach or suggest "receiving a digitized sense signal from the integrated circuit chip, wherein the at least one digitized sense signal is a digital representation of a corresponding process-dependent circuit parameter within the integrated circuit chip," as recited in independent claim 1 or "means for receiving a digitized sense signal from the integrated circuit chip, wherein the at least one digitized sense signal is a digital representation of a corresponding process-dependent circuit parameter within the integrated circuit chip," as recited in independent claim 11. In the Office Action, the Examiner appears to equate "chip signal 26" to the process-dependent circuit parameter recited in independent claims 1 and 11. (Office Action, p. 2). However, "on-chip signal 26 in this example is a small differential signal that is differentially to the sense amplifier 18 via the bit lines 14, 16, and typically corresponds to the amount of charge transferred from the memory cell." (Adams, col. 3, lines 17-21).

As described in Applicants' specification, circuit parameters "are considered 'process-dependent' because they depend on the particular technology used to process the IC chip." (Specification, para. [0035]). Examples of signals indicative of process-dependent circuit parameters, among others, include signal indicative of a high sheet-rho of an IC chip, signal indicative of a low sheet-rho of an IC chip, signal indicative of a gate-to-source threshold voltage of a PMOS transistor constructed on an IC chip, signal indicative of a gate-to-source threshold voltage of an NMOS transistor constructed on an IC chip, signal indicative of a transconductance parameter (K) of a PMOS transistor constructed on an IC chip, and a signal indicative of a

transconductance parameter (K) of a PMOS transistor constructed on an IC chip.
(Specification, para. [0038]-[0039]).

On-chip signal 26 is the output of the memory cell 12 and corresponds to the amount of charge transferred from the memory cell (i.e., whether the memory cell was storing a "1" or "0"). The on-chip signal 26 is therefore not a "process-dependent circuit parameter," as recited in independent claims 1 and 11.

In a further example, Adams does not teach or suggest "configuring an operational portion of the integrated circuit to account for the measured process-dependent parameter utilizing the determined analog value," as recited in independent claim 1 or "means for configuring an operational portion of the integrated circuit to account for the measured process-dependent parameter utilizing the determined analog value," as recited in independent claim 11. In the passage of Adams recited by the Examiner in the Office Action (Office Action, p. 3), Adams describes a test circuit 30 that "evaluat[es] a signal characteristic of an on-chip signal 26, such as, for example, the analog signal transferred from the memory cells in the array 12." (Adams, col. 4, lines 52-54). Adams does not teach or suggest that the test circuit uses the on-chip signal to configure memory cell 12.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 1 and 11 are patentable over Adams. Claims 2, 4, and 5 depend from claim 1 and claims 12, 14, and 15 depend from claim 11. For at least the above reasons, and further in view of their own features, dependent claims 2, 4, 5, 12, 14, and 15 are patentable over Adams. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

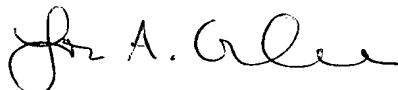
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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